

Cup Towers

Build a creation out of cups! Maybe a castle? A tower?

Recommended Age: 3–12 years old

Time needed: 15-20 minutes

Link to the Video:

<https://youtu.be/8C7J48FVh5Q>

What You Need

- Plastic or paper cups (lots and lots - the more you have, the more fun building)

Other materials from around the home can be added for even fancier cup creations. Some suggested materials include:

- Things from your recycle bin (cardboard, toilet paper tubes, egg cartons, yogurt containers, etc.)
- Small toys or figurines (animals, cars, people)
- Popsicle sticks
- Index cards (or other thick paper)

What You Do

- Gather materials for your cup towers.
- Set up a space to build. If it is helpful, designate a space to work – the floor is best for this activity. Use painter's tape to outline the spot, if needed.
- Start building!
- Note for grown-ups: some children will jump right in. Some may need some ideas to get them started. Here are some ideas:
 - Build a bridge or tower.
 - Build something that has a roof.
 - Build a castle using every material you have.
 - Pick your favorite toy and build it a home and neighborhood.
 - For older children: Give them a height goal, such as 3 feet. Or, have them try to place an object on top of the tower without it falling over.



What Else?

There are many ways to extend this activity. Some suggestions include:

- Make up a story about the people or animals that live in your castle or tower.
- Have fun knocking structures over and starting again.
- Build a large tower. Carefully remove one cup at a time from the middle, and see how long it keeps standing (It's like a cup tower version of Jenga!).

Tips for Adults

- Plastic or paper cups are good to play with. Be careful: some hard plastics can be sharp if they crack.
- If you are working with very young children, they may spend some time figuring out how the cups fit together, like a puzzle. They may spend time lining the cups up next to each other rather than building tall towers. This can be an opportunity for toddlers to practice their fine motor skills.
- It can be frustrating when a tower falls before you're ready. Encourage your child to keep trying and maybe do something differently. When it is time to clean up, knocking it down can be part of the fun!
- Ask your child questions and make comments to encourage them, such as:
 - Tell me about your design.
 - It's great that you keep trying, even if what you are making falls down!



Learning and Skills Connection

- **Thinking creatively and imaginatively:** Envisioning possibilities, solutions, and forms of expression; having hunches; thinking outside the box; problem finding and solving
- **Persisting:** Focusing, sticking to it, repeating, learning from mistakes
- **Being playful:** Engaging with a playful spirit; fooling around with alternatives; making and breaking rules; taking a whimsical approach, tapping into humor; feeling pleasure and joy
- **Practicing fine motor skills:** Using hands and fingers effectively to manipulate small objects

Doing STEAM with Kids

STEAM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math. There are lots of ways you can explore these letters, apart or together. Ask your child to make predictions, describe what they see, and to imagine possibilities and solutions. Don't worry so much about the "right" answer. Developing curiosity, and problem-solving skills are important first steps to doing STEAM!

